



EDUCATION & SOCIAL CARE

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT TEAM

THEMATIC REVIEW

THE INCLUSION OF PUPILS WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

APRIL 2014

THE INCLUSION OF PUPILS WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

Aim of the review

To evaluate how effectively schools and services are getting it right for every child with additional support needs (ASN).

Rationale for the review

The Education and Social Care Senior Management Team agreed a set of thematic reviews which would be undertaken by the Continuous Improvement Team. The plans for these reviews were endorsed by the Children and Young People's Services Committee. This report covers the third of these reviews. The rationale for this review also relates to Moray 2023 Priority 2 – Ambitious and Confident Children and Young People (Getting it Right for Every Child).

Background

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 places duties on local authorities, and other agencies, to provide additional support, where needed, to enable any child or young person to benefit from education. A very wide range of factors may lead to children and young people having a need for additional support. These factors fall broadly into four overlapping themes: learning environment, family circumstances, disability or health need, and social and emotional factors.

Additional support needs can be short or long term to help young people make the most of education. For instance, additional support may be required for a child or young person who for example, is being bullied; has behavioural or learning difficulties; is sensory impaired; is particularly gifted; is bereaved; is not a regular attendee at school; does not speak English as his/her first language; is looked after by a local authority.

Inclusion, in terms of this review, is defined by the amount of time a young person spends in mainstream education. This will be discussed further in the report.

Scope of the review

The review involved the analysis of an on-line survey of Head Teachers, visits to 8 primary and 4 secondary schools, Beechbrae Learning Centre and Pinefield Parc to observe practice; interviews with a wide range of stakeholders including Head Teachers, class teachers, specialist teaching staff, school support staff, social workers, centrally employed officers, pupils in primary and secondary school and parents. A Local Integrated Assessment & Planning (LIAP) meeting was also observed. It should be noted that this, although a comprehensive review, is only a 'snapshot' of the provision made to support pupils with additional support needs at the time of the visits. Due to time constraints, certain aspects of additional support needs provision were not included in the review. These included more able children, looked after children (the subject of an earlier review) and limited observation of documentation surrounding pupils with additional support needs.

Thirty four out of Moray's 53 schools responded to the on-line survey. Of those responding, most were clear about when to involve specialist staff, agreed that school staff work effectively with partner agencies and that information was shared appropriately between school staff and partner agencies.

Most schools agreed that specialist staff share information and discuss learning to enable other staff to identify clearly the learning needs of all. There was a less positive response to this question in the case of Beechbrae Learning Centre and Pinefield Parc.

Most schools agreed that referral processes were clear, however there was less agreement in relation to referrals to Beechbrae Learning Centre, Outreach and Autism and Communication Services. The majority of schools are clear about the respective roles and responsibilities of specialist staff; however there was less clarity reported around the role of Beechbrae Learning Centre, Sensory Education, Autism and Communication and Outreach Services.

Most schools agreed that arrangements for communication, assessment, planning, review, recording and reporting, in relation to children receiving support, are clear. These arrangements work well with Educational Psychology, English as an Additional Language, Sensory Education, Early Years Education Services and Pinefield Parc. The majority of schools agreed with this in the case of Autism and Communication and Outreach Services, but fewer than half agreed in the case of Beechbrae Learning Centre.

The majority of schools reported that they have good opportunities to meet with partners from English as an Additional Language, Sensory Education, Autism and Communication, Early Years Education Services and Educational Psychology; however less than half of the schools agreed with this in the cases of Beechbrae Learning Centre, Pinefield Parc and Outreach Services.

How well do children with additional support needs learn and achieve?

There is evidence of successful partnership working across services in Moray. Speech and Language Therapy play a particularly strong part in this area and social work services play an important role in the running of some Local Integrated Assessment & Planning (LIAP) meetings, but there can be a mixed approach in terms of responsiveness and speed. However, it must be acknowledged that not all services were seen to be participating effectively in partnership working. Staff feel that the Rowan Centre is particularly difficult to engage with, and they were not playing an active role in the process. Educational Psychology were also highlighted as difficult to engage with, due to the lack of input from this service. It was acknowledged however, that this service has had some particularly difficult staffing issues. Information sharing between agencies was also found to be varied. Staff at the Rowan Centre feel there are good relationships and examples of positive multi agency work going on, but there is a gap in the knowledge of schools and services regarding what is expected from them, and how the Rowan Centre referral system operates. They feel the loss of the Service Manager meetings has led to less opportunity to discuss issues and to engage in joint working.

There was evidence of good partnership working with parents and carers, particularly within primary schools. There was also an example of particularly good practice in one of the secondary schools visited, where they had a Parent Support Group, for parents of pupils who received extra support in school or at home. Most schools consulted with parents on their child's support plans, but there was little evidence to show that they were involved in the setting of targets. Having said that, there was clear evidence of positive relationships between schools and parents. Partnership working was strong around transition times from nursery to primary 1 and from primary 7 to S1. Some schools were well supported by Home School Link Workers, particularly with parents who find it difficult to engage with the school.

Of the classes visited there was evidence of positive relationships between children, teaching and support staff. There was generally a supportive ethos and children accessing additional support were happy with the support they were provided. They felt this support helped them to achieve their targets and goals. Some of the pupils were able to talk about how this support had progressed and some secondary pupils were able to discuss their thoughts around how support had changed for them and why; especially when due to changes in staffing and budgets. In examples of best practice, time was allocated for teachers and support staff to liaise and plan together, where appropriate. In smaller schools this is facilitated before classes or during breaks and meetings. There is not always dedicated time allocated to this process.

Some effective resources were used to support pupils and in particular visual supports, but there was not enough evidence to show effective differentiation across classes and groups. Some

teachers were able to evidence specific planning around small groups and individuals. Principal Teachers (PTs) and some support staff, report that there remains still a lack of understanding from some teachers regarding differentiation. In some cases, it was felt that teachers believed if pupils could not work with others without disruption, then they should not be in the class environment. This would appear to contradict with Moray's commitment to inclusion.

There was a lack of awareness in schools of the ASN Manual, although teachers were aware of referral systems in schools and who to go to if they had concerns. Most schools had an appropriate referral system but did not necessarily refer to this as staged intervention. There were various versions of Individualised Education Programmes (IEPs) but these were not consistently used across the authority. There was no clear evidence of pupil voice in the plans or to ensuring pupil needs are being met with respect to the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) agenda and their wellbeing. Some ASN pupil files were examined as part of the review, but many of these did not contain copies of pupil plans or much in the way of attainment data. However, there was not enough time during visits to schools to successfully audit these. Transition arrangements were generally strong, with schools sharing information and offering enhanced transition arrangements as required.

Principal Teachers, Support for Learning, are located in the schools within the Associated Schools Group (ASG) with an enhanced provision. There was confusion around the role of these teachers within the ASG and whether their responsibilities were purely to the allocated school or to the ASG as a whole. In some ASGs, the PTs did engage with other schools to offer advice and support. PTs in both primary and secondary schools state that they spend a lot of time training staff on how to meet children's needs. PTs find balancing aspects of their jobs challenging. The demands of providing support to auxiliaries and timetabling can mean that attending team meetings is an issue. Secondary PTs highlight that their contracts, remits and workloads vary considerably between schools. Some feel overwhelmed by their workload and believe they are not doing the best for some children. They argue that changes to support staff allocations have necessitated onerous timetabling changes and this has added to workloads immensely.

Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) operate an open referral system to ensure that young people are referred as soon as possible. They have experienced a 30% increase in their referrals in recent times and believe this may be down to heightened awareness from health in particular. Referrals from across Moray are received centrally and service delivery is allocated to each ASG as required. There is also a fast track system if needed. There was a concern raised regarding the transition of children to adult services, as there is no facility for this in Moray. SALT work hard with families and school to ensure everyone is kept informed, and to ensure that the needs of the children are met. They operate a 'therapy partner' system with families and schools, which they have found to be effective. However, they have noticed a difference in the support that can be offered in school due to changes in the allocation of support staff. It was not felt that schools were inclusive environments for children with speech and language difficulties, as items such as visual timetables and symbols were not common to school environments.

There was also concern from SALT, regarding the number of children being re referred at primary 3 stage as the teaching of phonics was not consistent across schools, and in pre schools. It was generally felt that there needed to be more collaborative work across services, for example with Early Years Services, Support for Learning Departments and Educational Psychology. There was also an issue around the sharing of LIAP minutes from social work. There was recognition that the Scottish Government Early Years Collaborative approach to early intervention, would be a positive way forward, and a strong vehicle for improvement and joint working.

Social Workers (Disability) feel that the LIAP process works well as it is an opportunity for the 'team around the child' to come together. However, there are difficulties in getting everyone together, particularly representation from health. It is seen as an opportunity to discuss what is going well, what is not working and what the solutions to the issues may be. Most people commented that the meeting is very dependent on the chair, as they need to be confident and able to direct discussions. They felt that interagency working was going well and

minutes were being shared. Referrals should go through the Intake and Assessment Team, but this was not consistent.

There is also some confusion when a meeting could be deemed to be a LIAP as opposed to a core group, education review meeting, planning meeting or professionals meeting. This was also mentioned by staff at the Rowan Centre. Transition into adult services is an issue, as the Transition Officer becomes involved at age 14, but there needs to be a lot of pressure applied to ensure there are appropriate actions put into place. The Transitions Board does support this work, but there does not appear to be enough support from adult services; this can mean that timescales are short and there is lots of change going on all at the one time.

One LIAP meeting was attended as part of the review process and the professionals involved believed that the process had got better and encouraged more joined up working. They felt that an educational representative should always be there and they felt it was good practice for the young person to attend where possible. They believed that the information for a request for assistance was not always passed on by the Lead Professional, and there were issues with information sharing in general. PTs (ASN) felt that the minutes from LIAP meetings were not sufficiently detailed enough to meet other needs such as IEPs and CSPs. and this could have a detrimental effect on school support. Some schools also had their own Multi Agency Pupil Support (MAPS) meetings, which adopted the solution orientated approach of a LIAP meeting. It should be noted that there are materials available for the format and purpose of a LIAP meeting, which stress that a LIAP is a possible approach and system to having a solution orientated meeting. However they have become a default position, in some cases, for doing integrated assessments.

The Early Years Educational Service provides additional support for children from age 3-7 years old. One of the functions of this service is to support language development, with referrals from pre schools and Educational Psychology, although they can come from any service or from parents. The service offers training to nurseries and they work closely with SALT. They are very involved in the transition process and have produced various resources to support this. The service make a service level agreement with schools, and are trying hard to support this with consultation time for teachers and time to discuss evaluations. The service would like more access to training on Curriculum for Excellence to help them link IEP targets to the experiences and outcomes. They would also like there to be clearer pathways for referrals.

How well does the authority support children with additional needs to develop and learn?

English as an Additional Language Service (EAL Service) staff support pupils in class and through some tutorials and are available to give advice (e.g. curricular advice). They feel they need more liaison time to discuss plans, assessments, and progress, although some Head Teachers are very good at making arrangements to accommodate this.

As part of this thematic review focus groups of teachers and native Polish speaking pupils at Elgin High School were interviewed. The pupils and teachers were very positive about the work of the bilingual translators. Pupils were also appreciative of the EAL Service, in terms of English tuition and provision of support for the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) qualifications. They welcomed the fact that they had initially had a Polish speaking 'buddy', but all agreed they had become too reliant on friends for translation. Teachers agreed that many Polish pupils rely too much on other Polish pupils for support.

Teachers appreciated the assistance of the EAL Service, particularly in helping with the translation of assessments; however, they felt that many pupils do not understand the language of assessments. This was confirmed by the pupils who stated that their biggest problem was comprehension, particularly with exam questions.

Guidance staff appreciate the involvement of the EAL teacher in pupil support meetings, the service's facilitation of ESOL, assistance in pastoral issues, course choice, liaising with universities and further/higher education applications.

All pupils felt they should have had more initial advice, and ongoing advice, on the Scottish education system. The pupils stated that care and welfare needs had generally been well met by the school, but were disappointed with the quality of the curricular and vocational guidance they had received. Overall the pupils were positive about the school and the EAL Service, but the two things they felt could be better were: more detailed and ongoing explanations of the Scottish education system and qualifications; and more help with comprehension, particularly in relation to exam questions.

The Sensory Education Service (SES) indicated that the quality of partnership working with schools was variable, dependant on needs. High input from the service tends to result in good liaison. At times SES staff feel they could do with more liaison time in schools, but all relevant information is shared. Liaison with parents is very good, with various communication strategies employed. SES staff often feel they have full ownership of cases where it should be joint ownership with schools.

SES staff feel there is a need for capacity building in schools and to up-skill existing support staff to enable them to provide more flexible support. Training can be a long process and availability, costs and locations of training can limit staff uptake, however, SES staff are willing and able to provide training (e.g. awareness raising). The SES undertakes annual evaluation, surveying parents, schools, pre-schools, SES staff and external agencies (e.g. health & charities). Parental satisfaction levels are high, however, SES staff recognise they need to do more to obtain feedback from pupils.

Moray Council launched its Autism Strategy in January 2014, which describes what services and support the authority plan to be available and how they plan to deliver it. This has been in response to an extensive piece of work being carried out to ascertain what young people with autism, and their families, need to support them in the future. The main areas for development are that there needs to be a more consistent approach to the identification and support that is offered to young people with autism. During the review it was ascertained that additional work has been completed in addressing diagnostic pathways, and in developing an autism support service. However, it was acknowledged that there are still issues surrounding: the inconsistent use and quality of IEPs; knowledge of the Autism toolbox; access to the ASN manual and work needs to be undertaken to further support transition. There is now an increased awareness and profile surrounding the support that is offered to young people with autism, and the strategy aims to address these issues.

A recent research study has also been conducted to establish how effective auxiliary support is within our schools, by one of Moray Council's Educational Psychologists. The survey highlighted some issues regarding young people being 'over supported'. This was not in relation to time allocation, but rather how much adult intervention was appropriate. Advice has previously been issued in relation to the remit of this role, however, there still appeared to be inconsistencies. There needs to be more communication around the role of support staff and more time allocated to discussions between teaching and support staff. Auxiliaries in primary schools play an important role in knowing and understanding pupil needs. They view their main role as keeping pupils on task, ensuring they understand and manage the learning environment, supporting the development of life skills and managing behaviour. Auxiliaries feel that support for pupils is becoming more inclusive and supportive. Auxiliaries generally feel well informed and able to meet pupil's needs however, this can vary across schools.

In one school, the new system for the allocation of exceptional funding has prompted the school management to reassess how support is utilised across the school every 6 weeks, to ensure maximum impact. A training package is being put together for support staff and a support framework will be developed over the next 2 years. Opportunities for joint training also need to be improved.

Training for auxiliaries is not consistent across Moray, with some feeling they have good access to relevant training to meet needs, whilst others have limited opportunity to good quality training. Training in first aid and behaviour management were viewed as essentials in their roles.

Some Moray primary schools have now incorporated a Nurture Room into their school. There is a great emphasis on communication and the staff model courteous and supportive behaviour through for example, eating together. This is an excellent example of how the needs of young people and their families, can be supported when they require additional help with attachment issues.

How well does the authority ensure equality and inclusion across schools and services?

Internationally, compared to countries across Europe, Moray has a very high level of inclusion. Levels of inclusion as defined by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education are set as, the percentage of children and young people in mainstream settings for over 80% of time. Taking account of the definition, Moray operates with 99% of children and young people in line with this level of inclusion.

Overall, Moray's children and young people are well-served by the provision across the council area. They feel they benefit from supportive relationships within an inclusive set of practice across schools and services in Moray.

Nationally, in Scotland, 20% of young people are identified as having additional support needs. In February 2014 in Moray, the roll of primary and secondary schools was 11,931 children and young people. Across the schools, 2301 children and young people are identified with additional support needs. This is at the same level as nationally at 20%.

Other figures that are broadly in line with a national level include 1.2% of children are identified as having additional support needs arising from Autistic Spectrum Disorder. This is also broadly in line with expected levels of prevalence for autism of 1 in 88 people. Approximately 3% of children and young people have dyslexia as their additional support needs. Across Moray, just over 500 children and young people (260 in primary, 240 in secondary) are identified with social, emotional and behavioural needs. This equates to 4% of children and young people within Moray's primary and secondary schools and is slightly above national levels.

Given that approximately 20% of children and young people across Moray are identified with additional support needs. Then the challenge for schools seeking to improve meeting learning needs towards practice with major strengths, will be to take better account of the needs of diverse learners across the authority. Such levels of identification of support needs can give confidence to parents that the authority is successful in identifying and assessing the additional support needs of children and young people.

Beechbrae Learning Centre caters for young people from primary 1 to primary 7 who require additional support outwith their allocated school. There is a major focus on developing the emotional and social wellbeing of the young people who attend, with time allocated each day to social activities. Each pupil is supported on a one to one basis by members of staff, and receive approximately 90 minutes of direct teaching. This block is mainly used to support literacy and numeracy skills. There is currently no referral system in place and places are allocated on a needs led basis, which is determined by the manager. There was only one young person currently on the waiting list. It was acknowledged that a more robust referral system is required to support the work that is undertaken here.

At Beechbrae, there appeared to be some effective transition and information sharing arrangements in place including: initial meetings with schools, termly review meetings and additional meetings as required. Class teachers also mentioned they used emails to share information on progress with class teachers in schools.

The young people attending Beechbrae appeared to have been involved, to some extent, in the planning surrounding their placement and their IEP. This took place in school and did not appear to be a shared process. In general, there was a lack of documentation to support the planning

around the child and the work that was being undertaken to support both their health and wellbeing and attainment, and no copies of IEPs were available. Some of the young people attending the centre only had part time timetables, the arrangements made to support the remainder of their time, if not spent in their allocated school, were not found to be acceptable. The role and remit for the centre must also be further clarified to ensure the needs of the young people attending are being met with reference to the entitlements, and the Broad General Education.

Pinefield Parc supports young people in secondary education who are considered hard to reach. It offers a safe and nurturing environment and seeks to form productive relationships with young people who are at risk of, or disengaged, from mainstream education. Pinefield Parc offers Maths and English on a one to one basis to young people if needed. In addition to this, they offer a range of alternative learning opportunities for example, workshop time, arts and crafts and Home Economics.

Pinefield Parc staff work in close partnership with parents and carers, schools, Action for Children and social work. They have identified the need to develop stronger links with service providers such as: Moray College, Skills Development Scotland and 16+ service providers; to support pathways and positive destinations for young people leaving Pinefield Parc.

There are strong, positive relationships between young people and staff and a culture of care and concern. There is a strong emphasis on meeting the social and emotional needs of the young people, but more needs to be done to build on their wider achievements and attainment.

There is a complex mix of profiles of young people attending Pinefield Parc, and this requires flexible timetabling. The Co-ordinator finds it a challenge to fulfil all of the administrative tasks with limited admin support and with no one to deputise in his absence, developmental work for Pinefield Parc is also a challenge. The staff at Pinefield Parc come from varied backgrounds including trades and there are two teachers supporting Maths and English. Teaching staff need to develop closer links with colleagues in education to create opportunities for professional development and to help them provide the best quality education they can, for the young people in attendance.

The 16+ Learning Choices Development Officer's remit, is to ensure that all young people on the school roll benefit from their entitlement to an offer of a positive destination on leaving school, and extending that entitlement to 16-19 year olds. It was felt that schools recognise their wider responsibility towards pupils more since the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence. Two secondary schools in Moray provide particularly good data to identify those at risk of not securing a positive destination after leaving school. It was perceived by the 16+ Learning Choices Development Officer, that many Guidance staff do not seem to know about his role and as such, the LIAP process is not used adequately to support young people who are at risk in securing a positive destination. There is a high dropout rate from further education placements in Moray and a low uptake of apprenticeships. In order to address this, there needs to be improvements in information sharing between schools and colleges.

Reviewing Officers have a broad overview of practices in Moray and they believe on the whole, that meeting children's holistic needs is improving. They highlight that some schools are much more creative in meeting diverse needs, but barriers to learning need to be identified earlier before they become entrenched. Reviewing Officers should ensure that additional needs are discussed in review meetings and check whether the child has a CSP, or is entitled to have one.

How well does our operational management and leadership support children with additional needs?

As part of the restructuring process, there has been a significant reduction in Education Officers with a specific remit for ASN. This responsibility now lies with the Head of Integrated Children's Services and the two 3rd tier managers within this service. The lead for Moray Council's GIRFEC group is the Head of Schools and Curriculum Development. It is very difficult to separate these roles and it is felt it would be more appropriate for a member of the management team to have an

overview and also have the strategic lead for GIRFEC. There is therefore some confusion around the responsibility for ASN in schools and establishments and the current structure has also made it more challenging to deliver the GIRFEC agenda across all services. From the evidence collected in this review, it is evident that there is an ethos of inclusion across Moray but this is not being supported by the policy and procedures in place. The Moray Council website was not found to be an effective tool for parents and carers, when they required information on additional support needs.

How good is the authority's delivery of services for children with additional support needs?

Strengths

- The commitment and level of inclusion across Moray.
- The strong, positive relationships between pupils and staff.
- The range of support, staff and services that are available, and the successful identification of need.
- Commitment of support staff and some of the training offered.
- Relationships between schools and families, particularly in the primary school.
- Arrangements for enhanced transitions.
- Sharing of information in some establishments, and the regular contact between departments and staff.
- Evidence of some liaison time being made available to Principal Teachers in secondary.
- Use of ASN files in some establishments.
- Some good practice evident in differentiation and catering for individuals or groups through modified activities and/or instructions .

Areas for development

- Time for liaison between teaching and support staff.
- More evidence of differentiation.
- The role of primary Principal Teachers (ASN) across ASGs.
- Understanding and use of Individualised Education Programmes.
- Policy and procedures relating to pupil support protocols and understanding of the staged intervention model.
- Purpose and effectiveness of the LIAP system.
- Effective use of the ASN manual across schools by all staff.
- Clarity of the referral process for Beechbrae and Pinefield Parc.
- Authority vision and promotion of support available within ASN.
- Implementation of GIRFEC.

Key recommendations

In addition to the improvement points stated in the body of this report, the Thematic Review makes the following recommendations:

1. Refocus the authority's vision, strategy and procedures as an inclusive service.
2. Improve multi agency working, and focus on building the curriculum and needs around the young person and their family.
3. Take forward key aspects of GIRFEC across authority.
4. Continue to take account of the needs of diverse learners to inform outcomes for all with additional support needs.